

# News Release

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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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Marshall Gold Discovery State Historic Park

## **CELEBRATE GOLD DISCOVERY DAY IN COLOMA**

COLOMA: Marshall Gold Discovery State Historic Park will celebrate the anniversary of James Marshall's momentous discovery of gold in the tailrace of Sutter's Mill on Saturday, January 24, from 10 a.m. to 4 p.m. The celebration will include living history, interactive period trade demonstrations, and music from the gold rush era. For more information, call the Gold Discovery Park Association at (530) 622-6198.

The day's event will focus on the site of gold discovery –Sutter's Mill – and will include four presentations - at 10:30 a.m., 12 Noon, 1:30 p.m. and 3 p.m. The Noon and 1:30 p.m. presentations will be first-person narratives with the portrayal of James Marshall reenacting the event. Outside the Miner's Cabin, there will be docents in period dress sharing information on mining methods and life in 1848 and young musicians playing music of the day. The day also includes the opening of the park's historic houses – the Papini, Thomas and Monroe Houses, James Marshall's Cabin, as well as the Schoolhouse. Demonstrations of 19<sup>th</sup> century skills, such as gold panning, spinning, quilting, rag-rug making, rope making, cornhusk doll making, "sad" ironing, hat making, pine needle basketry, carpentry, "49er cooking" and blacksmithing,

will all be on view. Town tours will be available at 11 a.m. and 1 p.m. The Museum, Research Library and Mercantile will be open all day.

At 11:15 a.m. in the Museum an embroidered seal of the State of California dating from the early 1900s will be presented by the Native Daughters of the Golden West, Marguerite Parlor #12 of Placerville. Local musicians performing music from the gold rush era will continue throughout the day.

In 1847 John Sutter asked James Marshall to build a sawmill along the banks of the American River. Sutter needed lumber for his expanding agricultural enterprises in California's Sacramento Valley and Marshall, a carpenter, was looking for a job.

Marshall and Sutter chose Coloma as the site for the sawmill. It provided a rushing river for power and a forest of pines for lumber. As the sawmill neared completion in January 1848, it became clear that the tailrace, where the water leaves the mill, needed to be deepened. Marshall's solution was to use the force of the water itself to scour out a deeper channel. The increased force of water through the tailrace caused sand and gravel to lodge between boulders and in small crevices.

On the morning of January 24, 1848, James Marshall reached into a shallow pool of water at the side of the tailrace. He scooped up a handful of sand, gravel and mud. And a few flakes of golden metal. "Hey boys," he lifted his voice to workmen around him, "By God, I believe I've found a gold mine." It was a moment that was to change the course of history.

Visitors are welcome to Marshall Gold Discovery State Historic Park year-round. The park is open from 8 a.m. to 5 p.m. The Museum is open from 10 a.m. to 4:30 p.m. Sunday through Wednesday, and from 10 a.m. to 3:30 p.m. Thursday through Saturday. The park is closed on Thanksgiving, Christmas, and New Years Day. For more information call the park Museum and Visitors' Center at (530) 622-3470.

The event sponsor is the Gold Discovery Park Association, a nonprofit organization whose mission is to promote the interpretation and conservation of Marshall Gold Discovery State Historic Park.

For information on programs or volunteer opportunities, call (530) 622-6198.

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